

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9858

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3911

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION

REF: SECTO 11285

1. WEEKEND VIOLENCE WAS AT HIGH LEVEL WITH LOTS OF FIGHTING DOWNTOWN AS BOTH SIDES JOCKEYED FOR BETTER POSITIONS. THIS LED TO SHARP INCREASE IN SHELLING AND ROCKETING WHICH SOON BECAME GENERALIZED IN ALL DIRECTIONS. LAST NIGHT IT DIED DOWN CONSIDERABLY. LULL CONTINUES THIS MORNING.

2. IT WAS IN INTEREST OF LEFTISTS POLITICALLY TO STEP UP THE PRESSURE. THEY WANTED TO PROVE THEIR IMPORTANCE IN PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST. STRATEGICALLY, THEY SOUGHT TO CAPTURE REST OF PORT BUT WERE UNSUCCESSFUL.

3. TODAY WE HAVE CEASEFIRE EXTENDED AGAIN BY JUMBLATT, THIS TIME UNLIMITED. IT IS IRONICAL THAT HE CALLS THE CEASEFIRES, YET IT SEEMS TO HAVE HELPED. JUMBLATT HAS ALSO CALLED, ONCE AGAIN, FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES.

4. THE PALESTINIANS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE SITUATION AND THE INABILITY OF SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN FORCES TO STOP THE SHOOTING. A PALESTINIAN DELEGATION WILL SHORTLY GO TO

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DAMASCUS BUT IT WILL BE TALKING ABOUT ELECTIONS AND NOT

REPEAT NOT ADDITIONAL SYRIAN FORCES.

5. MARONITES ARE STILL IN GOOD POSITION DEFENSIVELY. WHILE THEY MAY HANKER FOR MORE HELP FROM SYRIA, THEY DOUBT IT WILL COME AT THIS TIME IN THE STRENGTH THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE. GEMAYEL IS AGAIN CALLING FOR A DETERRENT FORCE. GEMAYEL WANTS ELECTION AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE PROBABLY THINKS THAT ENTRANCE OF SYRIANS AT THIS MOMENT WOULD DECREASE CHANCES OF ELECTION AS LEFT WOULD REACT ADVERSELY. AFTER ELECTIONS, IT COULD BE ANOTHER MATTER FOR MARONITES. CONTINUED VIOLENCE THEN COULD STRAIN THEIR DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY AND THEN LEAD TO LOUDER CALLS FOR INTERVENTION.

6. IN SHORT RUN PRESSURES FOR SYRIAN INTERVENTION OR WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIANS SEEM TO BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT. BUT, SHOULD THE VIOLENCE ESCALATE AGAIN TO WEEKEND LEVEL AND CONTINUE FOR LONGER PERIOD, THEN THERE WILL BE NO REPEAT NO ELECTION AND PRESSURES WILL BE ON FOR INTERVENTION.
BROWN

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